

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Mobridge School District Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006-2007

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Assistance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.
Needs Intervention	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- B – District Instructional Staff Information

- C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- D – Statewide Assessment Information
- E – Enrollment Information
- F – Placement Alternatives
- G – Disabling Conditions
- Student progress data
- Surveys
- Comprehensive Plan
- District Annual Needs assessment
- TAT referrals vs. non referral information
- Personnel training
- Screening
- Personnel training

Meets Requirements

The Mobridge School District has an established and effectively implemented ongoing child find system to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years, who may need special education. The district does have an effective pre-referral and referral system in place which ensures students are identified without unnecessary delay.

The district has no children placed in private schools at this time; however, if the district did, it would provide for children with disabilities that are eligible for special education and are voluntarily enrolled in private schools by their parents to participate in services in accordance with the requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Mobridge School District does use data-based decision making procedures to review and analyze school district level data to determine if the district is making progress towards the state's performance goals and indicators.

The district has not had a student receive a long-term suspension or expulsion in recent years. However, if this should occur, the district would review and analyze discipline data and revise policies/procedures if significant discrepancies were to occur between the long-term suspension and expulsion rates for children with and without disabilities.

Based on the district policies and practices regarding employment and supervision of staff employed or with whom the district contracts, an adequate supply of personnel are employed who are appropriately supervised and fully licensed or certified to work with children with disabilities. The district consistently meets the requirements for personnel development needs and takes appropriate action to meet those identified needs.

Needs Improvement

The district has identified the need to improve tracking data on students with disabilities who drop out of school.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The Mobridge High School Team Tiger Advisory/Advisee (TTA) was noted by the monitoring team as a promising practice in the district. Teachers meet with the same small group of students for a thirty minute period. The purpose is to build relationship and make an impact on activities including: goal setting, goal development, high school planning, career planning, physical health challenges, mental health challenges, and community service project.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team identified all areas as meeting requirements for Principle One: General Supervision.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- B – District Instructional Staff Information
- C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- E – Enrollment Information
- F – Placement Alternatives
- K – Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- Numbers of children screened,
- Preschool-age
- Age at referral
- Student progress data
- Personnel development information

Meets requirements

Based on parent surveys, staff surveys, state tables, and preschool screening records, the steering committee determined that the school district does provide a free and appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. The district has no students with disabilities that have been suspended for more than 10 days or expelled.

Needs Improvement

Although the district has a policy and procedures in place for suspension, district staff noted technical assistance is a need for conducting a manifestation determination.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team identified all areas as meeting requirements for Principle Two: Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), with the exception of Services to Children ages 3-21.

Needs Intervention

Issues requiring immediate attention

ARSD 24:05:13:02 Free appropriate public education (FAPE)

FAPE includes special education and related which meet the following requirements:

1. Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; 2. Meet the standards of the state board in this article and the implementing regulations for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; 3. Include preschool, kindergarten, elementary school and secondary school education in South Dakota; and 4. Are provided in conformity with an individual educational program and the article.

Through a student file review, the monitoring team determined there is a student (#25) identified with a disability that is not being provided special education services in accordance with state requirements. The student was determined eligible for services in developmental delay in April 2006. An IEP was developed; however, all areas of developmental concern were not addressed. Through the file review and staff interview, it was determined that special education services in these areas are not being provided, nor did the parent decline the service.

The district must reconvene the student's IEP committee and complete documentation to provide FAPE to the student.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- G – Disabling Conditions
- H – Exiting Information
- I – Placement by Age
- J – Placement by Disabling Condition
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Initial Referral log
- District Comprehensive Plan
- General curriculum information

Meets requirements

Based on file review and the comprehensive plan, Mobridge School District ensures the evaluation and reevaluation procedures and instruments meet the minimum requirements. The district ensures the proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process. In addition, the district ensures that

reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements to ensure students are appropriately evaluated for continuing eligibility.

Needs improvement

The district has identified parent input into evaluation process as an area to improve. The district also identified that more involvement with the reevaluation is needed from the IEP team as to the data needed to determine eligibility.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team identified all areas as meeting requirements for Principle Three: Appropriate Evaluation, with the exception of Eligibility Determination and Three-Year Reevaluation Timelines.

Needs Assistance

ARSD 24:05:25:04:02. Determination of needed evaluation data

As part of an evaluation, the individual education program team and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data determine whether the child has a disability, and determine whether the child needs special education and related services, as appropriate, shall: review existing evaluation data on the child, including evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child; current classroom-based assessments and observations; and observations by teachers and related services providers.

ARSD 24:05:25:06 Reevaluations

Each school district shall conduct a reevaluation of each child with a disability in accordance with this chapter if the district determines that the educational or related service needs, including improved academic achievement and functional performance of the child, warrant a reevaluation, or if the child's parents or teacher requests a reevaluation. A reevaluation conducted for these purposes may not occur more frequently than once a year, unless the parent and district agree, but shall occur at least once every three years, unless the parent and the district agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary.

The review team validated the district's findings that more involvement is needed from the IEP team as to the data needed to determine eligibility. In student file reviews, evaluation was not consistently found to support the IEP's present level of performance and goals. In addition, student file reviews indicated that three-year reevaluation timelines were not consistently met.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental rights document
- Consent and prior notice forms

Meets requirements

The Mobridge School District ensures parents are informed of their parental rights under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The school district's comprehensive plan outlines procedures to ensure the rights of children if no parent is identified.

The school district's comprehensive plan provides procedures on procedural safeguards, which provides the parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education. The comprehensive plan outlines policies and procedures for responding to complaints and due process hearing.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The review team agrees with the steering committee that data for Principle Four: Procedural Safeguards meets requirements, with the exception of Prior Notice. See information under: Needs Assistance

Needs Intervention

Issues requiring immediate attention

ARSD 24:05:30:04. Prior notice and parent consent

Informed parental consent must be obtained before conducting a first-time evaluation, reevaluation, and before initial placement of a child in a program providing special education or special education and related services.

In two student files, parental consent was not obtained for placement of a child in a program providing special education or special education and related services.

The district must reconvene the student's IEP committee and obtain initial parent consent for placement.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan

- Teacher file reviews
- Student progress data

Meets requirements

The Mobridge School District ensures that written notice is provided for all IEP meetings, and includes all required content. In files reviewed by the district, the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership and meets all identified responsibilities, and that the IEP contains required content. The district has policies and procedures in place to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student

In addition, file reviews completed by the district support transition plans for students are a coordinated set of activities, reflecting student strengths and interests, to prepare them for post school activities.

Needs improvement

The district has identified IEPs need to contain a written justification that describes why instruction for the student could not be conducted in the regular classrooms setting, consistently using the reject and accept model. Although transition is in compliance, the district identified this area as needing improvement. In addition, the district has determined that it is difficult to be consistent in gathering information from general education teachers.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Principle Five: Individualized Education Program meets requirements, except in the areas of Determination of Eligibility, IEP team membership, Special Factors/Behavior Impede Learning, Justification, Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, Goals, Extended School Year, and Graduation Requirements. See information under needs assistance.

Needs Assistance

300.306 Determination of Eligibility

(a) General. Upon completion of the administration of assessment and other evaluation measures - (1) A group of qualified professionals and parents of the child determine whether the child is a child with a disability, as defined in regulation and the educational needs of the child and (2) The district provides a copy of the evaluation report and the documentation of the determination of eligibility at no cost to the parent.

In three student file reviews, no documentation for eligibility was found. The students were preschool age. Staff interviews indicated documentation was not consistently completed for preschool children.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.01 Team membership

The district shall ensure the IEP team for each student includes parents, administrator, special education, regular education and other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student.

Preschool IEP meetings conducted this school year did not have a certified early childhood special education teacher in attendance to sign the IEP. Although the district has a teacher with an authority to act in this position, they are not authorized to sign the IEP.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program (IEP)

Each student's individualized education program shall include:

- (1) A statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, including;
 - a. How the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled students); or
 - b. For preschool student, as appropriate, how the disability affects the student's participation in appropriate activities.
- (2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including (if needed) benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:
 - a. Meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum; and
 - b. Meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability.

In student file reviews, present levels of performance (PLOP) did not consistently contain the required content (i.e. specific skill area(s) affected by the student's disability, to include strengths and needs, along with how the disability affects the student's involvement in the general curriculum and parent input). File reviews and staff interviews indicated a need to improve functional assessments to acquire the skill-based information to develop present levels of performance for students eligible for special education services.

The annual goals need to be measurable and reasonable to attain in one year. In student file reviews, the annual goals were not written in a manner that would be measurable. The following is an example: "Increase auditory processing skills with enrollment in the Fast Forward computer program."

ARSD 24:05:27:01.02 Development, review and revision of the IEP- Consideration of Special Factors

In developing, reviewing, and revising each student's IEP, the team shall consider the strengths of the students and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their student, the results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the students as appropriate, and the results of the student's performance on any general state or district-wide assessment program. The individualized education program team also shall: (1) In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, if appropriate, strategies, including

positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports, to address that behavior.

In two student files reviewed, behavioral assessment and/or present levels of performance contained information regarding the impact of student behavior on educational performance. However, in developing the IEPs for these students, the team checked "no," that the behavior does not impede learning and did not address strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, to address the behaviors.

ARSD: 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program.

ARSD 24:05:28:02 Continuum of alternative placements

The IEP must address the justification for placement. This statement must include an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the general classroom and in extracurricular and non-academic activities.

In student file reviews (particularly speech/language and middle school files), IEPs did not provide an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child would not participate with non-disabled children in the general classroom. For example, "student is able to participate in all regular classrooms and is successful with modifications that are tested; he/she receives resource room assistance for reading of test/assessments."

ARSD 24:05:25:26 Extended school year

Administrative rules state the district will provide extended school year (ESY) services to eligible children if the IEP team determines on an individual basis that such services are necessary for the provision of a free appropriate public education. When services are appropriate, an IEP team needs to specify goals and objectives to be addressed, determine the length of the school day, duration, determine the type(s) of service, state the amount of service needed and obtain parental consent.

In five files reviewed, the IEP indicated extended school year was needed; however, what goal(s) was to be worked on, type of service(s), beginning date, ending date, and the amount of service(s) and/or parent consent was wholly or partially not documented.

ARSD 24:05:27:12 Graduation requirements

Completion of an approved secondary special education program with a regular school diploma signifies that the student no longer requires special education services. The instructional program shall be specified on the IEP. The IEP shall state specifically how the student in need of special education or special education and related services will satisfy the district's graduation requirements. Parents must be informed through the IEP process at least one year in advance of the intent to graduate their child upon completion of the IEP and to terminate services by graduation.

In student file reviews for students who plan to graduate in May 2007, only one IEP stated specifically how the student in need of special education or special education and related services will satisfy the district's graduation requirements.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- B – Instructional Staff Information
- E – Enrollment Information
- G – Disabling Conditions
- J – Placement by Disabling Condition
- File reviews
- Parent, Student, General educator surveys
- General curriculum information

Meets requirements

The Mobridge School District ensures through file reviews and the comprehensive plan that all children receive the supports they need to be successful in the least restrictive environment

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the district is meeting the requirements for Principle Six: Least Restrictive Environment.